

JACK THE Giant Killer



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LOS ANGELES

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

I DARE say you have heard of King Arthur, or, as some call him, Prince Arthur, and his wife Genevra, who reigned in Britain many hundred years ago—being long before the time of the good King Alfred. I am going to tell you a wonderful and remarkable story, not about King Arthur, but about a marvellous person who lived in his time, and who did some very brave actions. His name was Jack.

This Jack was the son of a poor farmer who lived in Cornwall, near the Land's-end. Jack was always a bold, fearless boy. He feared neither heat nor cold, could climb a steep mountain, or plunge into a deep stream; and he delighted to hear his father's stories about the brave Knights of the Round Table, and of all their valiant deeds.

From constantly hearing of such things, Jack got to take a great interest in all that related to combats, victories, and battles. And the more he heard, the more anxious did he feel to find some enemy against whom he could fight; for he never doubted that his skill and courage would give him the victory in every encounter.

Now there were several great giants in England and Wales at the time of which I write; and against these giants Jack resolved to try his strength and skill. He could scarcely have chosen more fitting enemies; for the giants were hated and feared by everybody, with good reason. If there was one giant, whose absence all Jack's neighbors particularly desired, and whom they were especially sorry to see when he called in upon them, that giant was the one named Cormoran (also called Cormorant from his great and voracious appetite.)

This cruel monster lived on St. Michael's Mount, a high hill that rises out of the sea near the coast of Cornwall. He was eighteen feet high and nine feet round. He had a very ugly face, and a huge mouth with pointed teeth like those of a saw.

He used to come out of the cave in which he dwelt on the very top of the mountain, and walk through the sea when the tide was low, right into Cornwall; and the people who lived there used to take care



CORMORAN IN THE PIT.

that he did not find them at home when he called. However, he did not have his walk for nothing, for he carried off their cattle a dozen at a time, slinging them on a pole across his shoulder, as a man might sling a dozen rabbits.

When he got tired of eating beef, he would vary his diet by coming and stealing three or four dozen sheep and hogs, that he might have



BLUNDERBORE AND FRIEND HANGING.

a dish of pork and mutton ; and these animals he would string round his waist and carry off—the sheep bleating and the pigs squealing—to the great annoyance of the owners, who watched him at a distance and did not dare to interfere. For the giant had a big club which he used as a walking-stick, and it had spikes at one end. And he had been heard to say—that all those whom he did not knock down dead

with the thick end of his club, he would spit, like so many larks, on the spike at the other end; so the people were very shy of coming within reach of either end of the giant's club.

But there was one youngster who declared he would serve out Master Cormoran in one way or another; and this youngster was our friend Jack. This is the way he made good his promise:—

One winter's evening, when it was already growing dark, he swam from the Cornish coast to St. Michael's Mount, pushing before him a kind of raft on which were a pickaxe, a shovel, and a dark lantern. It was quite dark by the time he got to the mount; but in the giant's cave there was a light, and Jack could see Cormoran, who had just finished his supper, picking his teeth with a fence-rail. All night long Jack worked busily and silently by the light of his dark lantern, digging a deep pit before the giant's dwelling. By the time the morning dawned, he had made a great hole, many feet deep, and very broad. He covered this pit-hole with sticks and straw, and strewed earth and sand lightly over the top, so that it looked just like solid ground. Then he stepped back a few paces, took a trumpet that hung at the gate, and blew a loud blast as a challenge to the giant to come out and fight him. Cormoran woke up from his sleep with a start; he was in a great rage, sure, when he saw what a little fellow was standing outside defying him. "You saucy villain!" he roared out; "wait a moment, and I'll broil you for my breakfast!"

With this agreeable speech he turned back into the cave to get the neat walking-stick I have told you of; and having armed himself with this weapon, he came rushing out, intending to give Jack a taste—first of the thick end, and then of the spike at the other end. But the pit was in his way. The giant came tramping over it with his great heavy feet, and—"crack!"—in he went, right up to his neck, and stood there, roaring with rage, with only his great head above the surface of the ground.

"Aha, Master Cormoran," cried Jack, "what say you now—will nothing serve you for your breakfast this cold morning but broiling poor me?"

The giant was more enraged than ever; and he made such a mighty effort to get out of the pit, that the stones and rubbish came rolling down into the hole. Jack saw there was no time to be lost. He raised his pick-axe, struck Cormoran one blow on the head with it, and the cruel giant dropped down dead in a moment.

Jack returned in triumph to Cornwall; and when the people heard

of their enemy's death, they were very joyful; and the justices and great squires of Cornwall declared, that from henceforth, the valiant youth should be called JACK THE GIANT-KILLER; and as a further reward they presented him with a handsome sword, and a belt, on which stood in letters of gold, the words :

THIS IS THE VALIANT CORNISH MAN
WHO SLEW THE GIANT CORMORAN!

This was all very well; but one piece of work often brings on another. Jack soon found that his title of "Giant-Killer" brought some danger along with it, as well as a good deal of praise and honor; and a very few weeks after Cormoran's death he found he would have to sustain new combats.



JACK AND THE PRISONER.

Above all, there was a great ugly giant, who lived among the mountains of Wales. This giant had been a friend of Cormoran's, and had often been invited by that personage to dine with him off an ox or half-a-dozen sheep. When he heard of Cormoran's death he was very angry, and vowed vengeance against Jack.

Now it happened that Jack took a journey into Wales ; and one day, as he was traveling through a wood, he sat down beside a fountain to rest. The day was hot ; and Jack, overcome by fatigue, quickly fell asleep beside the fountain. As he lay there, who should come by but old Blunderbore, (this was the giant's name). The giant saw by the inscription on Jack's belt who and what he was. "Aha," he chuckled, "have I caught you, my valiant Cornish man? Now you shall pay for your tricks," and he hoisted Jack up on his shoulder and began to stride towards his castle as fast as he could. The jolting walk of the giant soon woke Jack out of his sleep, and he was very much alarmed when he found himself in Blunderbore's clutches.

Blunderbore seemed to enjoy Jack's fright very much ; and told him with a hideous grin that his favorite food was a man's heart eaten with salt and pepper ; and showed pretty plainly that he intended heartily to enjoy Jack's heart within a very short time. Blunderbore said he did not care to eat such a nice meal as the Giant-Killer would be, all by himself. He had one or two giant friends who used to come to supper with him. One of these old Blunderbore invited to spend the day with him that he might brag of having captured the famous hero, who slew their lamented friend Cormoran.

Jack paced to and fro in the room in which he was confined for some time in great perplexity, and at last ran to the window to see if he could leap out. It was too high for him to think of such a thing ; and—oh, horror!—there were the two giants coming along arm-in-arm.

Jack cast a glance around the room, in a far-off corner of which he espied two stout cords. To seize them, make a running noose in the end of each, and twist them firmly together, was the work of a moment ; and just as the giants were entering the gate of the castle, he cleverly dropped a noose over the head of each. The other end was passed over a beam of the ceiling, and Jack pulled and hauled with all his might ; in short, he pulled with such a will that the giants were very soon black in the face. When Jack found the giants were half strangled by the cords, he got out of the

window, and sliding down the rope, drew his sword and killed them both.

Jack lost no time in getting the giant's key and setting all the captives free; and he gave them the castle and all it contained as a reward for their sufferings; and bidding them a polite good-bye, pursued his journey.

He walked on sturdily till the night came, by which time he had reached a large and handsome house, which looked very inviting to a weary traveler, who had walked many miles, after killing two giants. He knocked at the door to ask admittance for the night, and was rather startled when the door was answered by a large giant. This monster was indeed a formidable fellow. He was as tall as Cormoran, and a foot or two broader round the waist, and had two heads. He was very civil, however. He made our hero a bow, and invited him into his house, gave him a good supper, and sent him to bed. But Jack did not entirely trust his host. He thought he had seen him shaking his fist at him slyly once or twice during supper time; so, instead of going to sleep he listened. Presently he heard the giant marching about in the room, singing a duet for two voices all by himself—the treble with one mouth, and the bass with the other. This was the song he sang:—

‘Though you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light;
My club shall dash your brains out—quite!’

“Indeed,” thought Jack, when he heard this amiable ditty. “Are these the tricks you play upon travelers, Mr. Giant. But I hope I shall prove a match for you yet.” So he began groping about the room to find something to lay in the bed instead of himself, against the time when the giant should bring the club. He found a great log of wood in the fire place; and this he put into the bed and covered it well up, while he himself lay concealed in a corner of the room.

In the middle of the night he heard the two-headed giant come creeping softly into the room. He sidled up to the bed, and—“Whack!—whack!—whack!”—down came his cruel club upon the log of wood, just where Jack's head would have been but for his clever trick. The giant, thinking he had killed his guest, retired. We may fancy how surprised he was when Jack came next morning to thank him for his night's lodging.



THE WELSH GIANT.

The giant rubbed his eyes and pulled his hair to make sure that he was awake ; but Jack stood looking on as cool as a cucumber.

"Why? ho-ow-w-w did you sle-e-e-p?" stammered the giant at last. "Was there nothing to dist-u-r-r-b you in the night?"

"Oh, I slept exceedingly well," replied Jack. "I believe a rat



THE THREE-HEADED GIANT.

came and flapped me with his tail three or four times ; but he soon went away again."

The giant was so surprised that he sat down on a bench, and scratched his heads for three minutes, trying to make it out. Then he rose slowly, and went away to prepare breakfast. Jack now thought he would play the giant another trick ; and he managed it

in this way. He got a great leathern bag and fastened it to his body, just under a loose kind of blouse he wore, for he thought he would make the giant believe he had an immense appetite. Presently the giant came in with two great bowls of hasty pudding, and began feeding each of his mouths by turns. Jack took the other bowl and pretended to eat the pudding it contained ; but instead of swallowing it, he kept stowing it in the great leathern bag. The giant stared harder than ever, and appeared to seriously doubt the evidence of his own eyes. He was wondering to behold such a little chap as Jack eat such a breakfast. "Now," said Jack, when breakfast was over, "I can show you a trick. I can cut off my head, arms, or legs, and put them on again, just as I choose ; and do a number of strange and wonderful things besides. Look here, I will show you an instance." So saying he took up a knife and ripped up the leathern bag, and all the hasty pudding came tumbling out on the floor, to the great surprise of the giant. "Ods! splutter hur nails!" cried the giant, "hur can do that hurself." So, determined not to be outdone by such a little chap as Jack, he seized his knife! plunged it into the place where HIS hasty pudding was!! AND DROPPED DOWN DEAD ON THE FLOOR !!!

After this great achievement Jack had a better title than ever to the name of the "Giant Killer." He continued his journey, and a few days afterwards we find him traveling in very grand company indeed. The only son of King Arthur had traveled into Wales, on an errand somewhat similar to Jack's. He wanted to deliver a beautiful lady from the hands of a wicked magician, who was keeping her in captivity. One day the prince fell in with a sturdy traveler, and found by the belt the stranger wore, who he was ; for Jack's fame had by this time traveled as far even as King Arthur's court. The prince therefore gladly joined company with Jack, who offered his services, which were, of course, accepted.

A mile or two further on they came to a large castle inhabited by a wonderful giant indeed ; a greater personage than even the gentleman who "spluttered his nails;" for this giant had three heads, and could fight five hundred men (at least said he could.) The prince felt rather awkward about asking such a personage to entertain him ; but Jack undertook to manage all that. He went on alone, and knocked loudly at the castle gate. "Who's there?" roared the giant. "Only your poor cousin Jack," answered the intruder. The giant, like most great men, had a good many poor relations, and Jack knew this very

well. "What news, cousin Jack?" asked the giant. Bad news! Bad news!—dear uncle," replied Jack. "Pooh!—bah!—nonsense," cried the giant; "what can be bad news for a person like me, who has three heads and can fight five hundred men?" "Oh, my poor dear uncle!" replied the cunning Jack, "the king's son is coming, with two thousand men, to kill you and destroy your castle!" All the giant's three faces turned pale at once; and he said, in a trembling voice, "This is bad news, indeed, cousin Jack; but I'll hide in the cellar and you shall lock me in, and keep the key till the prince has gone."

Jack laughed in his sleeve as he turned the key of the cellar upon the giant; and then he fetched the prince and they feasted and enjoyed themselves, whilst the poor master of the house sat in the cellar shivering and shaking with fear. Next morning Jack helped the prince to a good quantity of the giant's treasure, and sent him forward on his journey. He then let out his "uncle," who looked about him in rather a bewildered way, and seemed to think that the two thousand men had not done much damage to his castle after all, and that the prince's retinue had very small appetites. Jack was asked what reward he would have, and answered—"Good uncle, all I want is the old coat and cap, and the rusty sword and the worn slippers which are at your bed's head." "You shall have them," said the giant. "They will be very useful to you. The coat will make you invisible; the cap will reveal to you hidden things; the sword will cut through anything and everything; and the slippers will give you swiftness; take them, and welcome, my valiant cousin, Jack."

Jack and the prince soon found out the wicked magician, and in due course killed him, and liberated the lady. The prince married her the next day. The happy pair then proceeded to King Arthur's court, and so pleased was that monarch with what they had done, that Jack was made one of the Knights of the Round Table.

But Jack could not be idle. He wanted to be employed on active service, and begged the king to send him forth against all the remaining Welsh giants.

He soon had an opportunity to display his prowess; for on the third day of his journey, as he was passing through a thick wood, he heard the most doleful groans and shrieks. Presently he saw a great giant dragging along a handsome knight and a beautiful lady by the hair of their heads in a very brutal manner. Jack, at once put on his



invisible coat, and taking his sword of sharpness, stuck the giant right through the leg, so that the great monster came tumbling down with a crash. A second blow of the sword cut off the giant's head. The knight and his lady thanked their deliverer, you may be sure; but Jack would not accept an earnest invitation they gave him to go to their castle and live with them, for he wanted to see the giant's den. They told him the giant had a brother fiercer than himself, who dwelt there; but Jack was not to be deterred.

Sure enough, at the mouth of the cavern sat the giant on a block of timber, with a club by his side. "Here is the other," cried Jack, and he hit the giant a blow with his sword. The giant could see no one, but began to lay about him with his club; Jack, however, slipped behind him, jumped on the log of timber, cut off the giant's head, and sent it to King Arthur with that of the giant's brother; and the two heads just made a good wagon load.

Now, at length, Jack felt entitled to go and see the knight and his lady—and I can tell you there were rare doings at the castle on his arrival. The knight and all his guests drank to the health of the Giant-Killer; and he gave Jack a handsome ring with a picture on it of the giant dragging along the once unhappy couple.

They were in the height of their mirth when a messenger arrived to tell them that Thundel, a fierce giant and a near relation of the two giants, was coming, burning with rage, to avenge his kinsmen's death. All was hurry and fright; but Jack bade them be quiet—he would soon settle Master Thundel, he said. Then he sent some men to cut off the drawbridge, just leaving a slight piece on each side. The giant soon came running up, swinging his club, and though he could not see Jack, for our hero, knowing the importance of keeping out of sight on such occasions, had taken the precaution to put on his coat of darkness, yet his propensity for human flesh had rendered his sense of smelling so acute, that he knew some one was at hand, and thus declared his intentions.

"Fee!—fie!—foh!—fum!
I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive—or be he dead—
I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

"First, catch me," said Jack, and he flung off his coat of darkness and put on his shoes of swiftness, and began to run, the giant rushing after him in a great rage. Jack led him round the moat, and

then suddenly ran across the draw-bridge ; but the giant, who followed him very closely, no sooner came to the middle where the bridge had been cut, than it snapped with his weight at once, and down he went—splash!—into the moat, which was full of water and of great depth. The giant struggled fiercely to release himself from the unexpected and uncomfortable position in which he was placed ; but Jack, who had looked forward to this moment with the greatest anxiety, was quite prepared to counteract all his efforts. A strong rope, with a running noose at the end, had been kept in readiness, and was cleverly thrown over the giant's head by Master Jack, who had found such a weapon very useful on a former occasion, and had since taken great pains to make himself perfect in its use. By this means he was drawn to the castle side of the moat, where, half-drowned and half-strangled, he lay at the mercy of the Giant-Killer, who completed his task by cutting off the giant's head to the evident pleasure of all the inhabitants of the castle and the surrounding country. As Jack was naturally desirous that the king should be made aware of the good service he was doing the state, the giant's head was sent to King Arthur, who perceived at once the family likeness which it bore to those already in his possession ; and a letter of thanks was sent to Jack by the king himself.

After spending a short time very pleasantly with the knight and his lady, Jack again set out in search of adventures. And it was not long before he met with a good one. At the foot of a high mountain he lodged, one night, with a good old hermit. This hermit was very glad to see Jack when he heard that his visitor was the famous Giant-Killer ; he said, "I am rejoiced to see you, for you can do good service here. Know that at the top of this mountain stands an enchanted castle, the dwelling of the giant Galligantus. This wicked monster, by the aid of a magician as bad as himself, is now detaining a number of knights and ladies in captivity ; and to do so the more surely, the magician has changed them into beasts. Amongst the rest there is a duke's daughter who was carried off as she was walking in her father's garden, and borne away to this castle in a chariot drawn by two fiery dragons. They have changed her into a deer. With your coat of darkness you might manage to pass by the fiery griffins which keep guard at the gate, without being seen ; and your sword of sharpness would do the rest.

Jack wanted to hear no more. He promised to do his very best, and the next morning early he set off, dressed in his invisible coat,



JACK CATCHING THE GIANT THUNDEL.

to climb the mountain. And it was well he had put his garment on ; for long before he got to the castle he could see the old magician, who was of a very suspicious nature, looking out of the second floor window. He had an owl on his shoulder, which looked very much like himself ; and he had a long wand in his hand ; and stood poking his red nose out of the window in a most inquisitive manner.

At the castle gate sat the two griffins, likewise on the look-out ;

but thanks to his coat Jack passed between them unharmed. At the gate hung a large trumpet, and below it was written, as a notice to travelers

“Whoever can this trumpet blow,
Shall cause the giant’s overthrow.”

You may fancy what a blast Jack blew ; but you can hardly fancy the crash with which the gates flew open ; and the bewildered look of the giant and magician, as they stood biting their nails with vexation and fear. The captives were liberated, and the giant and magician killed in a most satisfactory way ; and Jack set out for King Arthur’s court with the fair duke’s daughter, whom he soon made his wife, and I am told they lived long and happily.

Now I only hope that all little boys and girls who read this history, will attack the gigantic sums, verbs, and lessons they may have to do as valiantly, and conquer them as completely, as the giants were overthrown by JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

A LAD who fought with giants ?
Yes,—and who killed them too—
He must have been a hero—
Gallant, brave, and true.

“But that’s all past and over”—
Perhaps my readers say—
“I’d like to meet a giant,
And fight with him to-day.

But I can never see them—
Their day is gone and fled ;
Not one is left to fight with,
The giants must be dead !”

My little valiant readers,
If you would giants kill,
Just listen, I will tell you
Where you may find them still.

I know one mighty giant,
The cause of much distress ;
Whene’er you meet him, fight him,
His name is IDLENESS.

Another just as hurtful,
Comes stalking by his side,
Step out and fight him boldly,
His name is SURLY PRIDE.

And there are many others—
One whom they FALSEHOOD call,
Child, see thou fight him boldly,
For he’s the worst of all.

These giants, like old Thundel,
Go stalking through the town—
If ever they attack you,
Out clubs, and knock them down !



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